Wales’ best kept secret? The BBC Finance Centre of Excellence (BBC CoE), based in the heart of Wales’ Capital City is responsible for the entire BBC network and its platforms – Television, Radio and Online.

It all started in 2006 when the BBC launched its Future Finance Programme and decided to consolidate all of their financial functions. Leighton Davies, the CoE Director since 2013 said he believed Cardiff was a natural choice for the Centre. The BBC already had a Cardiff presence, there was both office space and a talented pool of resources available and locating to Cardiff would reduce their operating costs by 50%.

Currently based in Llandaff, approximately 5 minutes from Cardiff’s City Centre, the BBC CoE employs around 230 staff. Some of their employees relocated to Cardiff in 2006 from other regional centres, however the majority of staff were recruited locally.

Leighton explained that they have had no problems hiring the right staff. “There are great people here in Wales”. With three business friendly universities in the area supporting a large number of students on tailored business-related courses this is understandable.

Recently the BBC CoE partnered with the University of South Wales on the Network 75 Scheme. This is a combined work and study route to a degree offered by the University. Here undergraduates apply their academic knowledge to real-life work within a host company. Leighton believes that these types of schemes are essential for business and he sees it as a fantastic opportunity in assisting businesses in getting the best staff possible. Network 75 not only allows companies like the
BBC to help mould the next generation of staff they need, but it also allows the students to exit university debt free and straight into employment – the scheme currently delivers 100% employment.

The best people, coupled with an attractive well known brand also equates to a very low turnover. “We still have about 70-80% of the same staff we had in 2006 – no-one leaves!”

For business purposes Leighton praised the links to London as “excellent”. Being only 2 hours on the train from London Paddington is a big plus to businesses in the Cardiff area that need to commute regularly.

Leighton highlighted direct contact with decision-making government officials and Ministers who are also located in Cardiff as a further benefit to business and said that their support has always been positive, along with that of Cardiff Council who have backed the BBC’s massive relocation project in the city.

The BBC CoE will shortly be moving to brand new Grade A offices within 2 minutes walk of Cardiff’s main rail station, right in the middle of not only Cardiff’s city centre but also the Central Cardiff Enterprise Zone, a zone dedicated to Financial and Professional Services. This allows the BBC CoE to take further advantage of the excellent transport links and the advantageous business environment from being located alongside some major players in the market like Admiral Insurance Group (with their Global Headquarters), Deloitte (who have their own Global Risk Centre of Excellence in the city) and Eversheds (with their 2nd biggest office in the world).

In addition, they will see benefits from the launch of a new internet exchange (October 2014) and the ongoing Welsh Government commitment to continue improvements to the transport infrastructure and commercial property, with a range of new Grade A office developments underway.

The BBC CoE’s drive for continuous improvement is one that matches the area, putting them in great company. So – isn’t it time you viewed Cardiff as the natural choice for your business?

For more information contact the Welsh Government.

Email: businesssupport@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Web: business.wales.gov.uk
Tel: 03000 6 03000

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